

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

AEC-11 AID-20 CEQ-02 EPA-04 SCI-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00

INT-08 EB-11 OIC-04 COME-00 RSR-01 /157 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7745

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGYEC PBOR, MX

SUBJ: AGREEMENT ON COLORADO RIVER SALINITY

REF: MEXICO 6477

1. SIGNING CEREMONY FOR THE SALINITY AGREEMENT WAS SIMPLE AND BRIEF. FOREIGN SECRETARY EMILIO RABASA MADE A SHORT STATEMENT EXPRESSING SATISFACTION WITH AGREEMENT, APPRECIATION FOR WORK OF MEXICAN NEGOTIATORS (CABRERA, HERRERA JORDAN, OSCAR RABASA, AMBASSADOR DE OLLOQUI) AND U.S. NEGOTIATORS. AMBASSADOR MCBRIDE RESPONDED SIMILARLY, EXPRESSING HIS SATISFACTION OVER THE DEFINITIVE AND JUST SETTLEMENT OF THIS

LONG-STANDING PROBLEM AND MENTIONING PARTICULARLY THE EFFORTS OF SECRETARY ROGERS AND AMBASSADOR BROWNELL TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. MINUTE 242 WAS THEN SIGNED BY THE IBWC COMMISSIONERS AND THE COMMISSION SECRETARIES. DIPLOMATIC NOTES RELATING TO THE MINUTE WERE SIGNED AND EXCHANGED, AND THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVES THEN WITHDREW.

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2. AFTER U.S. REPS LEFT, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HELD A

PRESS CONFERENCE (EMBASSY HAS A TAPED RECORD OF THIS SESSION). HE READ TO MEDIA REPS A "BACKGROUND" AND "COMMENTARY" PAPER ON SPECIFIC POINTS IN THE AGREEMENT AND THEN ANSWERED QUESTIONS. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION IN BRIEF, PARAPHRASED FORM ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. RE DAMAGES: FOREIGN SECRETARY INDICATED TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTY OF QUANTIFYING LOSSES SUFFERED BY MEXICAN FARMERS. FURTHER, HE NOTED THAT U.S. NEGOTIATORS ABSOLUTELY UNWILLING TO DISCUSS INDEMNIFICATION BECAUSE OF CERTAINTY THAT EVEN IF PRESIDENT NIXON HAD APPROVED, U.S. CONGRESS WOULD REJECT. MOREOVER, EVEN HAD DAMAGES SOMEHOW BEEN APPROVED AND DELIVERED TO GOM, THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN USED PRECISELY IN REHABILITATION EFFORTS AS ADDRESSED IN POINT 7 OF THE AGREEMENT.

B. AP REPORTER ASKED IF AGREEMENT WAS REALLY DEFINITIVE. FOREIGN SECRETARY STRONGLY AFFIRMED THIS WAS THE CASE. HE OUTLINED PROBABLE STAGES OF FOLLOW-THROUGH ON THE AGREEMENT AND SAID "...AS A FINAL RESULT, THE FARMERS OF THE MEXICALI VALLEY WILL HAVE FOREVER, THEY AND THEIR CHILDREN AND CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, WATER WHICH ON AN ANNUAL AVERAGE WILL NEVER EXCEED 1010 PARTS PER MILLION, WHICH IS PERFECTLY ACCEPTABLE."

C. RE TIME REQUIRED FOR REHABILITATION: FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID MEXICAN AGENCIES INVOLVED WHEN THEY HAVE FIRM PROGRAMS WILL PRESENT THEM TO THE U.S. "SO THAT THROUGH NON-REIMBURSABLE ECONOMIC COLLABORATION" THE WORK WILL BE CARRIED OUT.

D. RE COST OF AGREEMENT: FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID MEXICO INTERESTED IN QUALITY OF WATER BUT UNDERSTANDS THAT THE COST OF THE CANAL AND THE PLANT (I.E., TO THE U.S.) WILL BE \$90 TO \$100 MILLION WITH ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS OF ABOUT \$10 MILLION.

E. RE POSSIBLE RELATION OF RECENT VISIT OF DR. KISSINGER TO SALINITY AGREEMENT: FOREIGN SECRETARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REPLIED YES AND NO. HE SAID SETTLEMENT WAS PRACTICALLY REACHED WITH AMBASSADOR BROWNELL BEFORE CITED VISIT. HOWEVER HE EMPHASIZED THAT DR. KISSINGER WAS THE PERSON ON THE U.S. SIDE WHO CONTRIBUTED MOST TO THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM. FOREIGN SECRETARY INDICATED THAT DR. KISSINGER HAD PROMISED HIM THAT THIS MATTER WOULD BE RESOLVED ON THE BEST TERMS TO MEXICO AND "HE WAS THE PRIME MOVER ON THE U.S. SIDE." FOREIGN SECRETARY ADDED

THAT HE DID NOT DISCOUNT OR MINIMIZE AMBASSADOR BROWNELL WHOM HE ALWAYS FOUND TO BE AN AMIABLE, UNDERSTANDING AND POLITIC NEGOTIATOR.

F. ASKED IF THERE WERE ANY PROBLEM IN THE APPROVAL OF NECESSARY FUNDS BY THE U.S. CONGRESS, FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD UNOFFICIALLY AND INFORMALLY THAT VARIOUS NEGOTIATORS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS HAD INFORMED AND COUNTED UPON THE CONSENT OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBERS OF THE U.S. CONGRESS.

3. MORNING PRESS REPORTED THE AGREEMENT WITH VARYING DETAIL AND ACCURACY. GENERAL TREND, THOUGH WITHOUT EDITORIAL COMMENT AS YET, WAS ALONG LINES THAT SETTLEMENT WAS HIGHLY FAVORABLE TO MEXICO.

4. EMBASSY WILL POUCH TO ARA/MEX PRESS CLIPPINGS, PRESS PACKAGE PREPARED BY FOREIGN SECRETARIAT, AND TRANSCRIPT OF RABASA'S PRESS CONFERENCE. LATTER ARRANGED BY USIS ON STRICTLY UNOFFICIAL BASIS.
MCBRIDE

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